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Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2017 • \$2

Trump's criticism of Franken fits pattern

President seen as selective in whom he defends or condemns

BY JENNA JOHNSON

President Trump's decision to mock Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) for groping a sleeping woman while posing for a photo has once again made him a central figure in the national discussion about sexual assault, harassment and misconduct — and has again brought attention to past accusations against the president himself.

As a growing number of prominent men have publicly faced accusations, Trump has been selective in responding, largely on the basis of whether the accused is an ally or foe and focusing relatively little on the alleged victims.

Trump called his own accusers "horrible, horrible liars" and threatened to sue them, while coming to the defense of friends such as political commentator Bill O'Reilly and former Fox News chief executive Roger Ailes, accused of harassment or assault. Trump has also been mostly silent on Republican U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore of Alabama, who has been accused of initiating a sexual encounter with a 14-year-old girl when he was in his 30s, sexually assaulting a 16-year-old waitress and pursuing relationships with at least five other teenagers who were much younger than he.

Trump's responses have been notably different for some Democrats. Late Thursday night, the president tweeted about Franken, saying that a photograph of Franken appearing to grope a woman "is really bad, speaks a thousand words" and chastising the Minnesotan for "lecturing anyone who would listen about sexual harassment and respect for women." Trump has also said he was not surprised by accusations against

TRUMP CONTINUED ON A4

Heavens above



BILL O'LEARY/THE WASHINGTON POST

Beneath projected stars in a state-of-the-art theater, a camera operator waits for an event to start at the private dedication ceremony of the \$500 million Museum of the Bible in the nation's capital. Faith leaders and luminaries offered prayers — and praise for the institution, which opens to the public Saturday. **Story, B1**

Democrats who once defended Clinton now ask: Were we wrong?

BY KAREN TUMULTY AND KATIE METTLER

A torrent of sexual abuse allegations against powerful figures in politics and the media has reignited the defining political fight of the 1990s.

But this time, the battle is being waged within the ranks of Democrats and their allies, including leaders of the feminist movement. A growing number now say they were wrong to have



President Bill Clinton in January 1998, addressing reports of his affair with a White House intern.

so stridently defended former president Bill Clinton against the women who over the years accused him of offenses ranging from groping to exposing his genitals to rape.

The uncomfortable question is whether Democrats then were guilty of the sin they accuse Republicans of committing now by continuing to support President Trump and Alabama GOP Senate nominee Roy Moore, de-

CLINTON CONTINUED ON A4

TED has been grappling with sexual harassment complaints

BY ELIZABETH DWOSKIN AND DANIELLE PAQUETTE

SAN FRANCISCO — When Gretchen Carlson, a former Fox News anchor who now campaigns against sexual harassment, took the stage at a TED event this month, she described 2017 as a tipping point in the fight against workplace misconduct.

But behind the scenes, TED owner Chris Anderson and other senior officials had been grappling with accusations for much of the year that their own conferences, famed for turning short

speeches by leading figures into viral videos, had not been a safe place for women — and that the atmosphere of predatory male behavior was getting worse.

At least five people, including a past main stage speaker, told TED officials that they were harassed or groped during the organization's flagship conference in Vancouver in April, according to interviews and email correspondence seen by The Washington Post.

The nonprofit's general counsel Nishat Ruiter said in an April

TED CONTINUED ON A2

Once a ghost hunter by night — now a Trump judicial pick

BY ROBERT O'HARROW JR.

By day, he was a clerk to a federal judge, a Harvard Law School graduate at the start of his career. By night, he was a ghost hunter and a devotee of the macabre.

Brett Joseph Talley is now President Trump's nominee for a lifetime appointment to the federal bench as a U.S. District Court judge in Alabama.

Few in memory have been nominated with credentials quite like those of Talley, 36, an Alabama native, a political speechwriter, an author of horror books and a fledgling lawyer who has never tried a case.

In 2009 and 2010, he was a member of the Tuscaloosa Paranormal Research Group, a volunteer operation that since the early 2000s has held all-night vigils and used infrared cameras, handheld sensors and other devices to

search for spectral entities in plantation mansions, abandoned hospitals and other buildings.

"He was a real help. . . . He was quiet and real smart," David Higdon, the group's founder and leader, told The Washington Post. "We try to do everything scientific."

Talley did not respond to requests for an interview.

In 2014, when he was a speechwriter on Capitol Hill, Talley took a Post reporter ghost hunting in a District cemetery. As he paused at graves, Talley said he always maintained a level of skepticism during the paranormal outings.

"I tend to believe there's a good scientific explanation for the weird things people see and hear," Talley said at the time. "But I'm open to the idea, and it's

fun."

Talley's nomination has been received with some skepticism.

In recent days, he has drawn heat from multiple Democrats in Congress for failing to disclose in

NOMINEE CONTINUED ON A5



Brett Talley in 2014 at Holy Rood Cemetery in Washington.

Taking Islam to market

In the open air, mosque members in New Mexico work to dispel rumors about religion



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Mustafa Azimi, center, who helps answer questions in the Islamic Center of Las Cruces's discussion group, joins another group run by Randy Harris, a friend whose table is usually near the mosque's.

BY ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER IN LAS CRUCES, N.M.

The mother and daughter arrived just before 8 a.m., unpacking the table and folding chairs from the back of a white minivan. It was a chilly 43 degrees, and the sun cast long shadows between the farmers market stalls and the funnel cake truck, the smell of grilled meat and wood smoke hovering.

Sureyya Hussain carefully laid out the Korans.

Soon, the curious passersby began to approach with their questions, their comments and their concerns. The answers, Hussain hoped, would inform and enlighten — or at least spur constructive conversations about being Muslim in America.

"We wanted to have a voice about what Islam is for us," said Hussain, 50, who organizes the monthly table, where anyone can come to learn about Islam.

Muslims have been facing what they see as a tide of vitriol against them during the past two

FARMERS CONTINUED ON A6

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INSIDE

REAL ESTATE
Eye for hidden treasure
Yvette Freeman, a flea market lover, found a golden opportunity in Northwest Washington, restoring an early-1900s vintage townhouse with some unusual features.

METRO
Squeaker House election
A federal judge declined to force a count of 55 late absentee ballots in a close race that could help determine which party controls the Virginia House of Delegates. **B1**

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